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OBITUARY NOTICE.

IT is our solemn duty to record the removal from our midst of our much loved and deeply esteemed co-worker and brother Pestonji Muncherji Ghadiali, who died suddenly at Arconum on May 4th, 1898. To us the loss is irreparable ; to him the gain is indescribable, and selfish grief may not cloud the light in which he now dwells. For thus saith the Blessed Lord : "The wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead. Nor at any time verily was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be, hereafter."

THE PLACE OF ESOTERIC RELIGION AMONG THE CREEDS.

THE question as to what relation Theosophy bears to the Religions of the world is one which has been raised and answered from time to time ever since the foundation of the Theosophical Society ; but inspite of the clear and decided answers that have been frequently given on this most important point there still exists a certain amount of confusion in the minds of many who, ignorant of the principles of Theosophy, associate it with some particular form of existing belief. At one time we hear it spoken of as "Esoteric Christianity," at another as "Esoteric Buddhism"—names, leading the superficial observer to suppose that it is in some way specially connected with one or both of these Creeds.

In the early days of the movement Madame Blavatsky defined for us the scope and aim of Theosophy, and it was with no uncertain voice that she cleared away any doubt which might have previously existed in the mind, as to the position occupied by it among the religions of the world. But that was many years ago—and as we all find it much easier to repeat a question than to remember the answer, I quote what she said ; only reminding the general reader that, if he keeps her answer in mind, it will explain many difficulties and clear up many doubts, for it is the keystone of Theosophy, the base line from which every true Theosophist works.

In the Theosophist 1884 p. 150 Madame Blavatsky write :—

"Properly speaking there is no Esoteric Christianity, any more than there is Esoteric Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroasterism, or any other Esoteric "ism."

"We know of one Esoteric Doctrine—The Universal Secret Wisdom-Religion of old. The latter embraces everyone of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious Sun of Truth. Only humanity must be prepared for it lest it should be blinded by the unexpected splendour. The true Theosophist, he who works for the sake of truth—not for his own self and personal predilections—ought to respect every religious system—pander to none."

Here then the truth comes rolling forth like organ music under the sweep of the great master hand. It is this same "Universal Secret Wisdom Religion" that we are privileged to be taught, or rather to get a glimpse of, if so be we can

separate ourselves from the narrow surroundings in which our minds habitually work.

In the first place we see that directly we speak of an *Esoteric* religion or "ism"—no matter by what name we call it—we have dipped below the hard crust of creeds and dogmas, which separate one sect from another, to the God-inspired spiritual truth which lies below. We are in fact now dealing with that fragment of the Universal Wisdom Religion which once found expression in, and now lies buried beneath, the particular sect or creed we may be considering. Like an underground spring of pure water which supplies many wells—and in them is contaminated and coloured according to the local surroundings—so the "Secret Wisdom Religion of old" has been poured into the moulds of many creeds, to be coloured with dogmas, contaminated with exoteric additions, and called by various names, according to the characteristics of the race and country in which it has found a home. But who has sounded the depths of the spring itself where all the "Creeds of the antiquity" have their source.

Again "Our Mission is to gather together all the scattered rays and bring them to a focus." Yet how often we hear it said—"I find nothing new in Theosophy, it is all contained in 'my Bible,' or 'my Shashtra'";—just as if this settled the matter for good and all. We need to be often reminded that the object of Theosophy is not to teach a man the exoteric meaning of his own creed, but to point him to the spiritual meaning hidden in it, and to open his eyes to the fact that the same truths are contained in other religions, so that he may recognize the one voice of the great world Spirit expressed in many ways but breathing through them all. It is by keeping the idea of the *universality* of Truth clearly in view, that the mind of man expands. Then the tendency to hug one's own creed, and congratulate oneself that it contains more truth than another's, gradually gives place to the more expanded outlook, and as the old thought moulds in which man's mind is used to work break down, a wider horizon opens out before him.

Next we see that by bringing all the rays to a focus, we shall "help those who will come after us to unveil someday the glorious Sun of Truth." The work that we may be able to do may seem little indeed in the eyes of the world, and of our fellow men, but we are not working for men's praise or our own glory. All that concerns us is that as builders we put our very best into that work which it lies in our

power to do, and so help to lay a foundation broad and strong on which the great temple of truth must some day be reared.

We are not working for the present only or for immediate results, therefore the man who is driven back upon himself in despair at the hopelessness of individual and unaided endeavour, may well take courage in the wider view, and larger hope, for we are not alone or single handed, but if we will we may enlist in that mighty army whose Generals know the purpose of the world, and are working with knowledge for mankind. For the world is not an aggregate of blind forces acting on dead matter, but a living and connected whole, plastic to the touch, and responding to the thoughts of those who know the laws which guide the subtle agencies with which they have to deal—a world in which every unselfish endeavour however small tells.

Then our teacher shews us in what direction we should work in order to hasten on the unveiling of the Sun of Truth, “But humanity must be prepared lest it should be blinded by the unexpected splendour” that is to say mankind—the thinking portion at any rate—must have accustomed themselves to a far wider view of religion than is held by the majority at the present time. We must not wait until we hear the cry: “Behold the Bridegroom cometh go ye forth to meet him,!” before we learn our first lesson in *synthetic* religion; mankind must have already become familiar with the idea of the common source of truth which embraces all. He must have learnt to separate the letter from the spirit, the dogma from the eternal verity. It is for us to help to spread this knowledge, and to bring order out of the chaos of clashing creeds and opposite beliefs. Then like the walls of Thebes that rose to the music of Orpheus, the city of the living God will rise to the harmony of the wisdom music—that City which “had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it.” The Christian is not asked to forgo his Christ, or the Hindu his Krishna, or the Buddhist his Buddha, but the Christ of the dogmatist, limited and prescribed, must become the Christ or Buddhi principle “the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world”—The Shrî Krishna dwelling in the hearts of all. To realize this and shew it to their fellow men by word, example, and thought, is the duty of the true Theosophist. Thus may he hasten on the day when the Great Sun of Truth shall be unveiled in all His Glory.

A. R.

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA'S VIEW OF CHRIST.

(concluded from p. 205.)

THE new Testament is full of suggestions of practices by which Hindus have become sages. Witness the long meditations of Christ, His prayers, His long fasts, and those of His disciples. His sufferings and resignation at His death are conclusive testimony that He was a human being with a soul, as you and I are, but whose soul was laboring and succeeded in throwing off his mind and body and joining itself to that larger Soul that is manifesting itself so grandly throughout the universe.

In the last hours of His life he retired and prayed three times : 'If it be thy will, Father, remove this cup.' He saw with all the terrors his approaching ignominious death, to be inflicted in the most cruel manner. From His first prayer He could not summon the courage to face such painful death. Why? Because He could not control His mind. He could not entirely withdraw the senses from the body. He could not detach His soul from His mind. In the second prayer he failed. But after the third prayer he became resigned. 'It is thy will.' He had now reached the state of mind known to Hindus as Samadhi or superconsciousness and there was no pain for Him on the Cross. The nails driven into His hands and feet excited no more sensibility than they would if driven into so much wood. Painters have sometimes painted His face on the Cross as showing great anguish, but the life and resignation of the Man deny this idea.

It is well to explain briefly what is meant by the control of the senses as illustrated in the case of Christ. A friend of mine in London not long since went to see a Spaniard, who claimed to have mastered the control of his senses. The Spaniard agreed to submit himself to a thorough scientific test. A doctor drove a needle between the nail and flesh of his thumb. The Spaniard did not wince, but went on laughing and talking to his friends. After some minutes he was requested to relax his mind. Of course when he did so he was seized with the most excruciating pain, and blood began to run from the wound.

In India one of our great sages, Chaitanya went to another sage for instruction. 'Can you control your senses?' Chaitanya was asked. 'Test me,' he replied. The sage then put some powdered sugar upon Chaitanya's tongue. 'Hold it there for five minutes and I will believe you.' Chaitanya held it ten minutes and blew it off as dry as ever.

But this is only the first step to the state of the mind Christ reached when crucified. An incident in the life of one of our great sages in India is a parallel case. This sage when walking along the road out of a city, fell into the hands of a band of robbers. The robbers took the sage for a spy and chopped off his right arm with a sword. He quickly walked back toward the city, the blood pouring from the stump. He met a kind-hearted Brahmin on the way, who recognised him at a glance, and fell at his feet and bandaged the wound. But the sage was hardly aware that he had been wounded. His countenance glowed with deep calmness and tranquillity. He had not only withdrawn his senses, but he has shut his soul entirely from his mind. Other sages have been chopped to pieces uttering the declaration all the while that they could not be killed.

When Christ's spirit made connection with the great cosmic spirit He saw His terrible misfortune in a new light. Plutarch has well said 'alter the nature of misfortune by putting an entirely new construction upon it.' Christ showed that misfortune had its limits and man had the power and spirit to crush it and destroy it even in this life. No one who has ever for a moment reached beyond his senses will doubt this. Christendom has gone on for eighteen centuries calling this sublime heroism the work of God, and it was, but it was work that every man will sooner or later be able to do for himself.

Christ said He came to save men's souls and died that they might be saved. This is literally true. By good works, by devotion, by love, by mental concentration and meditation He realized that his own soul was a part of God. He saw that his life and death would fix the minds of other men upon him, and this very concentration of their own minds upon him has helped them to realize the divine spark within themselves. A Christian closes his eyes and prays earnestly. Light flashes through his mind. He sees God. He thinks his Saviour is answering his prayer, but instead his own divine nature is doing it. The thought of Christ and his good life and heroic death have only helped him to concentrate his mind and realize the truth in his Self or Soul. Quakers sit down and meditate in silence till the spirit moves them. What takes place when the spirit does move one of them to speak? Simply his own spirit has shed the mind and stands out alone, a beautiful, pure, and sublime consciousness, echoing to the voice of that greater intelligence seen in the gigantic motion of the stars,

heard in the voice of the winds, smelled in the breath of flowers and felt in the glad hand of love. Many of us Hindus worship Christ along with Buddha, Krishna, and other great sages, for we know that such a sublimely unselfish life as his must serve to concentrate our minds and open our divine nature.

Yes, Christ was a great spirit and yogi. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk, raised the dead, read the secret thoughts of His disciples, knew exactly what Judas was going to do but there was nothing supernatural in Him—nothing that cannot be done again over and over, nothing that science cannot fully explain through the Vedanta philosophy. Without Vedanta He cannot be fully understood and appreciated. Material science which now scoffs at His miracles will yet confirm His work through Vedanta. No devout Christian need ever for a moment fear that science can ever undermine the work of Christ, for Vedanta is here to sustain him. It was here before He was, and it is through Vedanta that every Christian will become a real Christian, a genuine Christ. It is through Vedanta that we Hindus know how to glorify Christ, and it is through Vedanta that Christians will learn to adore such men as Krishna and Buddha, for as we learn to realize the soul in ourselves, we learn to love the soul in others. Despair not then for the world. Sin is only another name for ignorance, and punishment and reward are nothing but reactions of our action. Realize your own soul and connect it with the great cosmic Spirit.

The Swami was asked why Christ did not tell His disciples and others how to practise yoga, which means joining your own soul to the universal Soul, if He were a yogi.

No one can say that he even practised yoga, as we know it in India, said the Swami. Still when a person is enjoined to love, to pray, to meditate and fix his mind on salvation, he is really practising yoga. Christ again and again enjoined his followers to practise these yogas. It all simply amounts to the result that he is able to separate his soul from his mind and free it during lifetime entirely from the bondage of matter. Very intense love amounts to very intense concentration of the mind on some object. If the object is noble the process soon burns out all the impure desires of the mind, the soul shines through the mind, the universal Self shines through a man as a pure white light shines through a clear glass. Love comes through mental concentration that the consciousness in us is subtracted from the mind. But Christ was a man of wonderful psychic powers, as has already been shown.

All the great spiritual leaders and all the great geniuses have to a certain extent been *yogis*, and many of them without knowing the fact. From what I have heard, I believe your own great President Lincoln was to a considerable extent a *yogi*. He acted very much at times like an inspired man, and has been called so. He must have known how to commune with the cosmic spirit. And so there have been many others and so many of us can become to-day with practice.—
The New York Sun.

A NEW THEORY OF THE STARRY HEAVENS.

A New and startling but eminently reasonable theory of the Kosmos or Starry Heavens has been described by Professor John Mackenzie in the current February and March numbers of the *Theosophical Review* under the title of "Theosophy and the New Astronomy." It can hardly be called a Theory, for it has been discovered by Sir Norman Lockyer after painstaking Spectroscopic observations spread over the past twenty-five years, of our own Sun, of the comets and systems of meteors or falling stars which belong to our solar system, of the immeasurably distant stars which are seen in our heavens, and of the nebulae or starry clouds, a few of which are in part visible in our Indian cloudless nights to the naked eye, but which in their thousands can only be seen by the aid of an astronomical telescope. The connection of Theosophy with this new Astronomy is exhibited in a quotation from the translation of the Stanzas of Dzyan, the commentary upon which by H. P. Blavatsky forms the three Volumes of our "Secret Doctrine." This quotation shows that the New Astronomy, which crowns the labours of Sir Norman Lockyer in his career as a modern astronomer, had already been foretold and minutely described in detail by Madame Blavatsky.

Sir Norman Lockyer's discovery is of course quite an independent one, but the fact that the theory had been printed and published in the Secret Doctrine long before Sir Norman's theory saw the light will add one more laurel to her crown who, through evil report and good report, flinched not in publishing the truths revealed to her from the Spiritual world by those Great Ones who have gone before after finishing their earth careers—though still working on earth.

The Spectroscope is quite a modern instrument, by means of which light from a point anywhere on the photosphere of

our Sun or from any of the heavenly bodies is first magnified by being directed through a telescope of sufficient power, then passed through a series of glass prisms arranged in a semicircular frame, by means of which a minute slit of light is enlarged and broken up into the seven prismatic colours from red to deep violet upon a broad ribbon-like band which is projected upon a screen for purposes of observation. This band does not exhibit uniform gradations of colour, but is crossed by numerous bright or dark lines, each one of which has its own exact and unvarying position in the band. It is this unvarying position which has enabled scientists to tabulate the constituents of which our Sun and the starry bodies are composed, by comparison of the Sun's spectrum with the Elements which make up the chemical constituents of our earth.

The quotation from *the Secret Doctrine* (Cosmogogenesis) p. 222 Vol. I. is as follows :—

“The Central Sun causes Fohat to collect primordial dust in the form of balls, to impel them to move in converging lines, and finally to approach each other and aggregate. . . . Being scattered in space without order or system the World-Germs come into frequent collision until their final aggregation, after which they become Wanderers [comets]. Then the battles and struggles begin. The older (bodies) attract the younger, while others repel them. Many perish devoured by their stronger companions. Those that escape become worlds.” On p. 225, it is said—

“Born in the unfathomable depths of space, out of the homogeneous element called the World-Soul, every nucleus of cosmic matter, suddenly launched into being, begins life under the most hostile circumstances. Through a series of countless ages it has to conquer for itself a place in the infinitudes. It circles round and round, between denser and already fixed bodies, . . . pulling towards some given point that attracts it, trying to avoid other bodies that draw and repel it in turn. Many perish, their mass disintegrating through stronger masses, and when born within a system, chiefly within the insatiable stomachs of various suns ; those which move slower, are propelled into an elliptical course and doomed to annihilation. Others moving in parabolic curves generally escape destruction owing to their velocity.” Also, at p. 269, says Mr. Mackenzie the generation of cosmical systems is discussed along similar lines, showing the remarkable agreement of what is now

“known to science as the meteoritic hypothesis with the truths of occultism.”

More than one hundred years ago astronomers by a process of induction thought out the theory of the “nebular hypothesis.” The process of induction is only another term for that development of thought described in occultism as “intuition”;—the evolving of new ideas by “deep thought from within,” as contradistinguished from “deduction,” which is reasoning upon a series of observed facts from without. They saw that the nebulae shone with a faint light which, when the spectroscope was invented, was proved to be hydrogen gas.

It is curious that Sir Norman Lockyer in his new theory confirms the truth of the “nebular theory” with the exception that for “hydrogen gas simply” we have now to read “hydrogen gas developed and maintained by the infinite collisions of an infinite number of meteoric stones.” The kosmos is made up of an infinite number of so called *dead* stones, which are known, from the analysis of hundreds in the museums of the world, to be composed principally of the metals iron and nickel, but which also contain in varying minute proportions all the elements known to chemists. These on an average weigh less than one ounce avordupois each, and striking as they do our atmosphere with the velocity of thirty to fifty miles per second or 3000 miles per minute, are at once intensely heated by atmospheric friction, and appear as brilliant rockets or shooting stars in the heavens, dissipating as impalpable red dust. This dust has often been seen on frozen snow by explorers on Arctic glaciers and in the Alps. Meteors of a larger size burst with a loud report, but are seldom dangerous, because the surface of the earth is so large as compared with the half square foot of surface exposed by each human being on it ; still larger meteors are too large to become heated to bursting point in the few seconds occupied by them in their passage through our atmosphere, they become melted on their outer surface only, and fall to the ground as red-hot balls more or less spherical in shape, cooling as black balls to which worship has alway been paid by the ignorant, as manifestations of the pleasure or displeasure of their Deity. The largest of these weighing 5 tons is in the British Museum in London. But Lieutenant Peary claims to have found one on the northern shore of the Island continent of Greenland which weighs 100 tons, and which the United States Government intend to ship by a special Arctic expedition

and instal in their principal Museum. Doubtless many meteors much larger than 100 tons are embedded underground, but they are not discovered because on account of their size they have not sufficient heat to shine in their sudden passage in the sky, and if they fall in the day their velocity is so great that they are no more visible than is a cannon ball in its flight.

Says Mr. Mackenzie, "It has been calculated by "Dr. Schmidt of Athens, who took observations for seventeen "years, that the average number of meteors visible on a "clear night to any one observer is fourteen per hour. Six "observers stationed in a circle could count six times this "number in the whole heavens. From this it is calculated that "twenty million meteors that are visible fall on the Earth "every 24 hours. As twenty times the number fall which are "not visible, a total of 400 millions of meteors fall daily on the "earth from space, having a combined weight of one hundred "tons." And yet we never hear of any one being injured, for the reason above stated! This daily weight of red-hot falling matter adds appreciably to the size of the earth, as also to the heat which enables the whole creation of animal and vegetable organisms to live and thrive thereon. "It is "calculated that in a portion of space equal to the size of the "earth, the average number of meteoric stones is 30,000, and "that therefore their average distance apart is 250 miles." Well can space be called empty which contains only a one ounce lump of metal in every 250 miles? Nor is it surprising that astronomers found a confirmation of their nebular theory in the fact that the smallest telescopic stars are observed to shine with undimmed brilliancy through the largest nebula.

Scientists have found that the temperature of stellar space outside the influence of our atmosphere is 360 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, a temperature inconceivably cold to our bodily senses, a proof that these meteors must be cold and hard in their normal state, being possessed only of the energy due to their great velocity. The gaseous condition of nebulae having now to be discarded, it remains to be considered how the meteoric theory will fit in with the observed facts. Though meteors are usually 250 miles apart, there are well known recurrent seasons in which they blaze over the heavens. There is an annual display on the 13th or 14th of August, and another in the middle of November. This proves that the orbit of our earth intersects the orbits of two meteoric rings once each year, and as these displays are

fairly uniform each year, it follows that the meteor ring is also fairly uniform all round its orbit. Once in about every thirty-three years, however, occurs the grandest display of shooting stars. This has occurred regularly since the year 902 A. D., in which year records tell us it first became visible. The more probable explanation is that it was then for the first time noticed, and its reappearance thereafter watched for each year until its periodicity of 33 years became established. Its last appearance was all over the world on the night of the 14th November 1866. It was fully pictured in the illustrated papers of that date. It commenced in Bombay at 9 P.M. The fact that it strikes the earth with such regularity proves that it is a comet, moving in an elliptical orbit, and that though the earth passes through the comet's orbit each year, it strikes the comet only every 33 years. There are 100 other swarms less brilliant than these whose positions and paths have been definitely marked out, through which the earth passes periodically. Though all these swarms revolve round the Sun as planets, they are all comets.

A comet is a vast swarm of meteoric stones travelling through space. The light coming from its head is due to heat generated by the constant collisions of these stones with each other. It has no tail till it nears the Sun. Its tail is always directed away from the Sun, and is probably due to the light of the Sun shining through the vapours of the comet's photosphere given off by these collisions. It is partly due to the intense heat developed by its proximity to the Sun. Every comet must pass through the Sun's corona which was so clearly visible during the recent total eclipse, and also in many instances pass close to the Sun's photosphere. This remarkable fact was exhibited in a large comet visible in Bombay about 20 years ago. On the evening previous to its sweeping round the Sun, it was visible as an *evening* star with its tail *away from the setting Sun*. By the next morning it had swept round, and was visible as a *morning* star with its tail still *away from the rising Sun*. As the light of the tail can only become manifest by the Sun's light causing it to strike other meteors in space, it is probable that the tail is only visible when the comet is passing through the mass of meteors circling as planets in immediate proximity to the Sun, and which are visible every evening for two hours after sunset as the zodiacal light.

D. G.

(To be continued.)

THE HINDU CYCLE EXPLAINED.

THE great Hindu Cycle called Mahakalpa comprises the enormous period which intervenes between the evolution of the Universe (Srishti) and its dissolution.

During evolution all names and forms become manifested and during involution the discrete products of nature are withdrawn into their indiscret source. A Mahâkalpa is equivalent to 311,040,000,000,000, mortal years which again is equal to 100 years of Brahma which is equal to His life-time. The above means that what appears 311,040,000,000,000 years from the standpoint of man appears as a hundred years from the standpoint of Brahma. Psychologically considered this will mean that the interval between two thought-impressions of Brahma is greater than the interval between the thought-impressions of a human being. The Idea of time is produced by the sequence of our thoughts. During sleep, when the sequence of thought is abolished, we have no idea of time whatever. If the interval between our thought-impressions becomes greater what now appears to us as one hour appears then as one minute. This is the explanation of the mysterious age of Brahma.

Kalpa is the period which intervenes between the conjunction of all the planets on the horizon of Lankâ at the first point of Aries and a similar subsequent conjunction. One day of the life of Brahma constitutes a Kalpa. A Kalpa embraces the reign of 14 Manus. *Manu* signifies a planetary spirit. Each planet has a planetary spirit of its own and that spirit rules the planet for a fixed number of years from his own spiritual plane. It must not be supposed that the rule of a planetary spirit is at all similar to the rule of an earthly monarch. The Planetary spirit rules by his pure and unerring will-power which becomes objectified in the material plane. Every *Manu* rules for seventy-one Mahâyugas—each Mahâyuga consist of four Yugas viz., Satya, Treta, Dwâpara, and Kali.

What are these Yugas? They are vast astronomical periods during which the planets influence mankind in peculiar ways. The benefic planets are very powerful in the Satya Yuga and the malefic planets are so in the Kali Yuga. The surroundings of the Satya Yuga tend towards spiritual development and that of the Kali Yuga towards material advancement. The periods of time covered by these Yugas bear a certain ratio to one another. The Satya covers a period four times as much as the Kali; the Dwâpara, two times; The Treta, three

times. As in the Mahâyuga there are four Yugas, so if we take the smaller cycles into account, we find that the year is divided into four periods, the Satya, Treta, Dwâpâra and Kali. *Satya Yuga* of every year begins in the month of Bysack and continues for 144 days ; then follows *Treta* which continues for about 108 days ; then follows *Dwâpâra* which continues for 72 days ; then follows Kali which continues for about 36 days.

Coming to the smallest cycle, that is day, we find that the first twenty-four *Dandas* comprise Satya Yuga, the next 18 *Dandas* comprise, Treta ; the next twelve *Dandas*, Dwâpâra ; and the remaining 6 *Dandas*, Kali.

The practical use of such division is obvious ; particular times of the year and particular times of the day are suited to particular ceremonies and particular religious exercises. Among the occultists particular hours of the day are considered to be more auspicious to Yoga than other hours. A little explanation is necessary here. The time just before sunrise has been classed under Kali Yuga. But experience shows that this time has a most purifying influence upon the human mind. The explanation is that according to the Shastras the end of the Kali Yuga has a most purifying influence on the human mind as it is succeeded by the Satya Yuga.

Light of the East.

THEOSOPHY AND ASTROLOGY.

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THEOSOPHY TO ASTROLOGY ?

THE following answer to the above question of J. P. M. by G. R. S. M. is given in the *Vahan*, Vol. VII, No. 7, and deserves careful study and attention.—As the *Vahan* knows no one who has the authority to speak in the name of Theosophy, we will bring the question within the range of practical politics by re-wording it as follows : “ What is the attitude of members of the Theosophical Society to astrology ? ” and so we shall be dealing with facts of knowledge and not with opinions merely. The members of the Society take up the most divergent and contradictory attitudes with regard to astrology ; some believe in it with various qualifications, a few even make of it a religion, as it were ; some ridicule it as an absurd superstition, and proclaim the astrologer a charlatan ; the majority are inclined to think there *may be* something in it, but are content to admit their ignorance of the art, and what is more, their indifference to it even supposing there may be truth in it,

being quite content to subscribe to the saying, "The wise man rules his stars ; the fool obeys them," and so be quit of the whole business. Each member, then, has his own opinion, and if I give J. P. M. mine on the subject, he should remember that it is mine and not the Society's, least of all Theosophy's.

I must confess, then, that I never could get up much respect for modern astrology, in spite of the fact that *sometimes* extraordinarily accurate predictions are made by professed astrologers. I have never known astrology do any good to the character, and I have often known it do a great deal of harm. On the other hand, I know that some of our members are making an honest endeavour to turn the art to ethical service, and in that I wish them every success. But before any real good can be done, it will be necessary to make a searching enquiry into the genesis of astrology, and replace the traditional rule of thumb astrologising by some more rational method. Hipparchus and his plagiarist Ptolemy, with the cheerful impudence of scholastic Alexandrians, hellenised the real Chaldæan art out of existence, and modern astrology is based on their misconceptions solely. Modern astrology is *not* the Chaldæan art, it is the superstition of a Greek burlesque of the true science of the stars. In the distant past, when the "Chaldæan" civilisation was at its height (though under a different name, for that time was prehistoric) "astrology" was the religion of the race, and *that* astrology was (and is) one of the root-rays of religion ; but between this real science of the solar system and its inhabitants and the modern caricature, there is as little connection as between the present-day conceptions of the death of Jesus and the real self-sacrifice of the Logos.

But even before the days of Hipparchus the true science had fallen from its purity ; and so we find the Buddha strictly forbidding his followers to dabble with the art. The direct disciples of the spiritual Christ also, among the early Gnostics, knew the true state of affairs : and so we find one of the writers in the *Pistis Sophia* treatise declaring that the astrologers were all at sixes and sevens ; that it was only by chance that they hit on a correct prediction ; for that as soon as a man's nature contacted the Christ spirit, there was a revolution in the spheres, and the motion of half of them was entirely inverted ; of this the ordinary astrologer knew nothing, and so his predictions were almost sure to be erroneous. This statement was based on a knowledge of the real Chaldæan art, which had been so materialised by the Greeks ;

on a knowledge of what the "planets" really are, and how many there are, and how placed, in fact, of the entire economy of the whole system. This economy is entirely unknown to modern astrology, and it is wonderful that with such false premises it ever succeeds in getting even a single correct prediction from the few old rules of thumb which have been handed down from the genuine Chaldæans.

Modern astrology, then, requires to be purified, and ancient astrology to be rediscovered. But in this vulgar and huckstering age, when the income of the professional astrologer comes mostly from ignorant servant girls, or stock-dealers, or book-makers, what chance is there of purification; and until there is purification, what claim has mankind to rediscovery?

THE RIDDLE OF LOVE AND HATE.

FO the great majority of us life presents a series of tangles and puzzles—tangles we cannot unravel, puzzles we cannot solve. Why are people born differing so widely in mental and in moral capacity? Why has one infant a brain denoting great intellectual and moral power, while another has a brain which marks him out as one who will be an idiot or a criminal? Why has one child good and loving parents and favourable circumstances, while another has profligate parents who detest him and is reared amid the foulest surroundings? Why is one "lucky" and another "unlucky"? Why does one die old and another die young? Why is one person prevented by "accident" from catching a steamer or a train that is wrecked, while scores or hundreds of others perish unaided? Why do we like one person the moment we see him, while we as promptly dislike another? Questions like these are continually arising, and are as continually left unanswered, and yet answers are within reach; for all these seeming incongruities and injustices, these apparently fortuitous events, are merely the results of the working out of a few simple and fundamental natural laws. An understanding of these underlying laws makes life intelligible, thereby restoring our confidence in the divine order and endowing us with strength and courage to meet the vicissitudes of fortune. Troubles which strike us like "bolts from the blue" are hard to bear, but troubles which arise from causes we can understand, and can therefore control, can be faced with patience and resignation.

The first principle that must be firmly grasped ere we can begin to apply it to the solving of life's problems is that of reincarnation. Man is essentially a soul, a living and self-conscious individual, consisting of this self-conscious life in a body of very subtle matter; life cannot work without a body of some kind; that is, without a form of matter however fine and subtle the matter may be, which encloses it, and thus gives it separate existence in this universe; bodies are often therefore spoken of as vehicles, that which encloses life making it individual. This soul, when he comes into the physical world by the gateway of birth, puts on a physical body as a man puts on an overcoat and hat to go out into the world beyond his own home; but the physical body is no more the man than the overcoat and hat are the body which wears them. As a man throws away worn out garments and puts on new ones, so does the soul casts off a worn out body and take to himself another (Bhagavad Gitâ). When the physical body is outworn the soul passes through the gateway of death, dropping the physical vesture and entering the "unseen" world. After a long period of rest and refreshment, during which the experiences of the past life on earth are assimilated, and thus increase the powers of the soul, he returns again to the physical world through the gateway of birth and takes on a new physical body, adapted for the expression of his increased capacities. When human souls were born into the world for the first time millennia ago, they were but embryonic souls knowing neither good nor evil, with infinite possibilities of development—as being the offspring of God—but without any actual powers save that of thrilling feebly in response to external stimuli. All the powers latent within them had to be roused into active manifestation by experiences undergone in the physical world; by pleasure and pain, by joy and suffering, by success and failure, by fruition and disappointment, by successive choices well and badly made, the soul learns his lessons of laws that cannot be broken and develops slowly one by one his capacities for mental and moral life. After each brief plunge into the ocean of physical life—that period generally spoken of as "a life" he returns to the invisible world laden with the experiences he has gathered, as a diver rises from the sea with the pearls he has riven from the oyster bed. In that invisible world he transmutes into moral and mental powers all the moral and mental materials he has gathered in his closed earth life, changing aspirations into capacity to achieve, changing the results of efforts that failed.

into forces for future success, changing the lessons of mistakes into prudence of foresight, changing past sufferings into endurance, changing errors into repulsions from wrong doings, and the sum of experience into wisdom. As Edward Carpenter well wrote: "All the pains that I suffered in one body became powers that I wielded in the next."

When all that was gathered has been assimilated—the length of the heavenly life depending on the amount of mental and moral material that has been collected—the soul returns to earth; he is guided, under conditions to be explained in a moment, to the race, the nation, the family, which is to provide him with his next physical body, and that body is molded in accordance with his requirements, so as to serve as a fit instrument for his powers, as a limitation which expresses his deficiencies. In the new physical body, and in the life in the invisible world that follows its offthrowing at the death which destroys it, he retreads on a higher level a similar cycle, and so again and again for hundreds of lives, until all his possibilities as a human soul have become active powers, and he has learned every lesson that this human life can teach. Thus the soul grows from infancy to youth, from youth to maturity, becoming an individualized life of immortal strength and of boundless utility for divine service. The struggling and evolving souls of one humanity become the angels of the next humanity, the spiritual intelligences that guide the evolution of worlds posterior to their own in time. We are protected, helped and taught by spiritual intelligences who were men in worlds older than our own, as well as by the most highly evolved men of our own humanity; we shall repay the debt by protecting, helping and teaching human races in worlds that are now in the early stages of their growth, preparing to become, untold ages hence, the homes of future men. If we find around us many who are ignorant, stupid and even brutal, limited in both mental and moral powers, it is because they are younger souls than we are, younger brothers, and hence their errors should be met with love and helpfulness instead of with bitterness and hatred. As they are, so were we in the past; as we are, so shall they be in the future; and both they and we shall go onward and onward through the eternal ages.

This then is the first fundamental principle which renders life intelligible when applied to the conditions of the present; I can only work out from it in detail the answer to one of the questions propounded above, namely, why we like one person

and dislike another at sight, but all the other questions might be answered in similar fashion had I time and space. For the complete answering, however, we need to grasp also the twin principle of Reincarnation and of Karma, or the law of causation.

This may be stated in words familiar to all: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Amplifying this brief axiom, we understand by it that a man forms his own character, becoming that which he thinks; that he makes the circumstances of his future life by the effects of his actions upon others. Thus, if I think nobly I shall gradually make for myself a noble character, but if I think basely, a base character will be formed. "Man is a creature of reflexion; that which he thinks upon in one life he becomes in another," as a Hindoo Scripture has it. If the soul dwells continually on one train of thought a groove is formed into which the thought-force runs automatically, and such a habit of thought survives death, belonging to the soul, and is carried over to the subsequent earth life as a thought tendency and capacity. Habitual study of abstract problems, to take a very high instance, will result in another earth life, in a well developed power for abstract thinking, while flippant, hasty thinking, flying from one subject to another, will bequeath a restless, ill regulated mind to the following birth into this world. Selfish coveting of the possessions of others, though never carried out into active cheating in the present, makes the thief of a later earth life, while hatred and revenge, secretly cherished, are the seeds from which the murderer springs. So again unselfish loving yields as harvest the philanthropist and the saint, and every thought of compassion helps to build the tender and pitiful nature which belongs to one who is "a friend to all creatures." The knowledge of this law of changeless justice, of the exact response of nature to every demand, enables a man to build his character with all the certainty of science, and to look forward with courageous patience to the noble style he is gradually but surely evolving.

The effects of our actions upon others mould the external circumstances of a subsequent earth life. If we have caused widespread happiness we are born into very favorable physical surroundings or come into them during life, while the causing of widespread misery results in an unhappy environment. And so on, whether our influence has been widespread or restricted, in proportion to our sowings do we reap. We make relationships with other souls by coming into contact with

them individually, and bonds are forged by benefits and injuries, golden links of love or iron chains of hate. This is Karma, a Sanskrit word which has become widely adopted into our tongue, we having no single word which expresses the same idea of a changeless sequence of cause and effect in all worlds, not only in the physical. With these complementary ideas clearly in the mind, we can answer our question very easily.

Links between souls, between individualized beings, cannot antedate the first separation of those souls from the world-soul, as drops may be separated from the ocean. In the mineral and vegetable kingdoms the life that expresses itself in stones and plants has not yet evolved into continued individualized existence. The word "group soul" has been used to express the idea of this evolving life as it animates a number of similar physical organisms. Thus a whole order, say of plants, like grasses, umbelliferous, or rosaceous plants, is animated by a single group soul, which evolves by virtue of the simple experiences gathered through its countless physical embodiments. The experiences of each plant flow into the life that informs its whole order, and aid and hasten its evolution. As the physical embodiments become more complex, subdivisions are set up in the group soul, and each subdivision slowly and gradually separates off, the number of embodiments belonging to each subdivision group soul thus formed diminishing as these subdivisions increase. No individual ties can be set up at these early stages of evolution, as the individualized soul does not yet exist. In the animal kingdom this process of specialization of the group souls continues, and in the higher mammalia a comparatively small number of creatures is animated by a single group soul, for Nature is working toward individualization. The experiences gathered by each are preserved in the group soul, and from it reach each newly born animal that it informs; these appear as what we call instincts, and are found in the newly born creature. Such is the instinct which makes a newly hatched chicken fly to seek protection from danger under the brooding wing of the hen, or that which impels the beaver to build its dam. The accumulated experiences of its race, preserved in the group soul, inform every member of the group. When the animal kingdom reaches its highest expressions the final subdivisions of the group soul animate but a single creature, until finally the divine life pours out anew into this vehicle now ready for its reception, and the human soul takes birth and the evolution of the self-conscious intelligence begins.

From the time that a soul animates a single body, links may be set up with other souls, each likewise dwelling in a single tabernacle of flesh. The souls, dwelling in their physical body, come into touch with each other; perhaps a mere physical attraction draws together two souls dwelling respectively in male and female bodies. They live together, have common interests, and thus links are set up. If the phrase may be allowed, they contract debts to each other, and there are no bankruptcy courts in Nature where such liabilities may be cancelled. Death strikes away one body, then the other, and the two souls have passed into the invisible world; but debts contracted on the physical plane must be discharged in the world to which they belong, and those two souls must meet each other again in earth life, and renew the intercourse that was broken off. The great spiritual intelligences who administer the law of Karma guide these souls into rebirth at the same period of time, so that their earthly lifetimes may overlap, and in due course they meet. If the debt contracted be a debt of love and of mutual service, they will feel attracted to each other; the souls recognize each other, as two friends recognize each other, though each be wearing a new dress, and they clasp hands not as strangers but as friends. If the debt be one of hatred and of injury, they shrink apart with a feeling of repulsion, each recognizing an ancient enemy, eyeing each other across the gulf of wrongs given and received. Sometimes love has been betrayed, and when the betrayer in a future life meets the one who was wronged, the old love springs up and stretches out its arms with longing, to find itself met with indifference or repulse. Cases of all these types must be known to every reader, although the underlying cause has not been known; and indeed these sudden likings and dislikings have often foolishly been spoken of as "causeless," as though, in a world of law, anything could be without a cause. It by no means follows that souls thus linked together necessarily reknit the exact relationship broken off down here by the hand of death. The husband and wife of one earthlife might be born into the same family as brother and sister, as father and son, as father and daughter, or in any other blood relationship. Or they might be born as strangers and for the first time in youth or in maturity, to feel for each other an overmastering attraction. In how brief a time we become closely intimate with one who was a stranger, while we live beside another for years and remain aliens in heart. Whence these strange affinities, if they are not the remem-

branches in the souls of the loves of their past? "I feel as if I had known you all my life," we say to a friend of a few weeks, while others whom we have known all our life are to us as sealed books. The souls know each other, though the bodies be strangers, and the old friends clasp hand in perfect confidence and understand each other; and this, although the physical brains have not yet learned to receive those impressions of memory that exist in the subtle soul-bodies, but that are too fine to cause vibrations in the gross matter of the brain, and thus to awaken responsive thrills of consciousness in the physical body.

Sometimes, alas! the links being of hatred and wrongdoing, draw together ancient enemies into one family, there to work out in misery the evil results of the common past. Ghastly family tragedies have their roots deep down in the past, and many of the awful facts recorded by such agencies as the Society for the Protection of Children, the torture of helpless children even by their own mothers, the malignant ferocity which inflicts pain to exult in the sight of agony—all this becomes intelligible when we know that the soul in that young body has in the past inflicted some horror on the one who now torments it, and is learning by terrible experience how hard are the ways of wrong.

The question may arise in the minds of some: "If this be true, ought we to rescue the children?" Most surely yes. It is our duty to relieve suffering wherever we meet it, rejoicing that the good law uses us as its almoners of mercy.

Another question may come: "How can these links of evil be broken? Will not the torture inflicted forge a new bond, by which the cruel parent will hereafter be the victim and the tortured child become the oppressor?" Aye! "Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time," quoth the Buddha, knowing the law. But he breathed the secret of release when he continued: "Hatred ceases by love." When the soul, that has paid his debt of the past by the suffering of inflicted wrong, is wise enough, brave enough, great enough to say, amid the agony of body or of mind, "I forgive!" then he cancels the debt he might have wrung from his ancient foe, and the bond forged by hate melts away forever in the fire of love.

The links of love grow stronger in every successive earthlife in which the linked souls clasp hands, and they have the added advantage of growing stronger during the life in heaven, whereinto the links of hate cannot be carried. Souls that have debts of hate between them do not touch each other in the

heavenly land, but each works out such good as he may have in him without contact with his foe.

When the soul succeeds in impressing on the brain of his physical body his own memory of his past, then these memories draw the souls yet closer, and the tie gains a sense of security and strength such as no bond of a single life can give, very deep and strong is the happy confidence of such souls, knowing by their own experiences that love does not die.

Such is the explanation of affinities and repulsions, seen in the light of Reincarnation and Karma.

ANNIE BESANT.

—*New York Journal.*

REINCARNATION AND THE ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES.

IN the *Vahan* for February 1898, Vol. VII, No. 7, H. D. puts the question.—“Is the doctrine of reincarnation to be found in the Zoroastrian scriptures?” to which the following answer appears under the well known initials of G. R. S. M. In the fragments of the Avesta text, and the Zend commentaries (and in the later Pahlavi documents) preserved by the Parsis, the modern representatives of the very ancient Iranian tradition of the Âryan root-faith, the doctrine of reincarnation is said to be absent. These are, however, but a small portion of the original documents, and are said to date from the Sassanid period (c. A. D. 300). On the other hand Greek writers emphatically assert that the doctrine of reincarnation was one of the main tenets of the Magian tradition. The voluminous Zoroastrian scriptures are said to have been translated at Alexandria about the same time as the Jewish Pentateuch, somewhere in the third century B. C., and several Greek writers dealt with them at length. Porphyry (flor. 275 A. D.), refers to them, and also himself wrote at length on the subject. The famous pupil of Plotinus several times asserts that reincarnation was a basic doctrine of the Magians, a designation which we learn from a fragment of Chrysostom, meant the “wise,” or “those who worshipped God in silence.”

REVIEW OF A NEW GUJARATI BOOK ENTITLED "THEOSOPHY."

WE are glad to announce that the Gujarati work entitled "Theosophy" is now out of the hands of the printers, and a copy of it is before us for review. This is the book which has for some time past been advertised in the *Theosophic Gleaner* and is written by one of the members of the Bombay Blavatsky Lodge. The author who modestly keeps his name from appearing dedicates it to Madame Blavatsky through whom, as he states, "spiritual knowledge has been revived in the present time throughout the world." The volume is of super-royal size, handsomely bound in cloth and contains 320 pages of printed matter exclusive of 15 pages of detailed contents. It is embellished with four diagrams three of which give the principles of man and the planes of the universe, and the fourth showing the prismatic analysis of light, is introduced to illustrate the existence of the higher and invisible planes of being. There are eight chapters between the covers, written in the form of dialogues between an *Inquirer* and a *Theosophist*. In this way the author has succeeded in laying before the reader in a clear and most succinct way the main teachings of Theosophy. In fact we may safely assert that it is the best epitome of the Ancient Wisdom that has yet appeared in the Gujarâti language. Turning to the analysis of the work itself we find the first chapter opening with an enquiry into what Theosophy is. Here the author very successfully clears up many of the prevailing misconceptions regarding it, and very beautifully lays before the reader the fundamental teachings. The chapter closes with a demonstration of the importance of the study to all who would know how to live, the meaning of life and the real secret of happiness. Thus he leads us on to the teaching contained in the subsequent chapters. The second chapter gives information regarding the constitution of the Cosmos, on its seven planes and the mutual relation of these to one another, the description is helped by a good diagram, and the proofs brought forward in favour of their existence—based on modern scientific research—is very striking. This is one of the most important chapter in the work, and a right comprehension of it renders the entire theosophic study easy.

The third chapter treats of the constitution of man—otherwise known as the Seven Principles of man—in a clear and lucid manner. The subject is further illustrated by a diagram containing the classification of these principles from

the standpoint of Theosophy and the other schools of Oriental philosophy.

The fourth chapter deals with the all-important subject of Reincarnation ; in it fourteen convincing arguments in its favour are given which logically and conclusively proves it to be a necessary fact in the economy of life, as solving many of the hopeless puzzles of our being.

The next two chapters are devoted to “ Death and After States ” and the “ Astral Plane ” which fittingly follow the preceeding one. The former explains the after death conditions, from physical death upwards through its stages of etheric, astral and devachanic existence, with all its various grades of ghosts, spooks, shells, elementaries, elementals &c. The chapter on the Astral Plane contains exhaustive information on the subject and is certainly highly interesting and instructive.

The seventh chapter treats of “ Karma ”—the law of cause and effect on all the planes of the Universe. In it arguments relating to destiny and free will are well-handled. Power of thought in the making of Karma and the various divisions of Karma are nicely expounded, and finally the way to liberation from its sway is pointed out.

The last chapter is devoted to the “ Path of Discipleship ” and the methods by which this path can be trodden, and the efforts which one has to make to see his Guru face to face in this life.

Thus the book begins with the most simple enquiries relating to Theosophy and their solution, and after dealing with its teachings in a systematic manner ends with information relating to the *sumum Bonum* of life, *viz.* the way of liberation from the miseries of birth and death and the attainment of true freedom and happiness in spiritual life, in the peace which passeth understanding.

The author has written the book studiously adopting a style easily comprehensible both by the Hindus and Parsis, thus putting within reach—even of the less educated classes—the life giving words of divine wisdom. The book supplies a real want—long felt on this side of India among the Gujarati reading public—giving as it does a clear and intelligent exposition of Theosophy, and we therefore hail its advents with delight for it is really a valuable acquisition to vernacular theosophic literature. We accordingly strongly recommend it to every lover of truth and of the good of humanity—in other words of Theosophy. We earnestly solicit all our well-to-do Gujarati brothers

in this presidency, to give it as wide a circulation as they can, by purchasing a goodly number of copies for distribution among their poorer brotheren, and we invite them to induce others to do the same, thus bringing the blessings of Theosophy to the very doors of the high and low on this side of India. Looking to its important and valuable contents, to its superior printing and paper and its handsome cloth binding, the price of the book Re. 1 is extremely moderate and the effort therefore deserves every encouragement at the hands of the public.

Notes and News.

WRITING on Miss. Edger's recent tour the *Theosophist* says—Miss. Edger seems to have met with a sincere and hearty welcome at all the places visited by herself and Col. Olcott during their late Indian tour; and their enthusiastic receptions and the numerous addresses which were presented in acknowledgement of the gratitude of the populace for service rendered them by these workers testify to the success of the undertaking. On several occasions the audiences addressed by Miss. Edger numbered over 2,000 persons. A Rawal Pindi paper says "she exhorted the public to gird up their loins to revive the Ancient Spirituality of the Hindus. She asked the people to aid and co-operate with the movement which had been set on foot to collect information regarding rare Manuscripts in Sanskrit; the person in charge of this affair in the Punjab being Rai B. K. Laheri Bahadur, Prime Minister, Faridkot State. Col. Olcott also spoke and tried to impress on the minds of his audience the urgent necessity of forming classes for Hindu boys, to give them a sound moral teaching derived from the Hindu Sástras."

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A CORRESPONDENT of the *Indian Mirror* referring to Miss. Edger's lectures at Midnapur said: "Her knowledge of every branch of modern science made her lectures so attractive and impressive that every one carried a lasting idea home. While expounding many abstruse principles of religion she corroborated her every argument by scientific proof. She is a most valuable acquisition to the Theosophical Society." The plan of the tour was so admirably arranged (continues the *Theosophist*) owing to the kindness and foresight of the Joint-General Secretary, Indian Section, Babu Upendranath Basu, that there was not the slightest failure to connect from

beginning to end. Miss. Edger cherishes many kind memories of her Indian brothers and sisters. The cost of the tour was defrayed by Branch subscriptions.

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WE are glad to learn from the same source that Lala Jiva Rama Thappur has founded the "Annie Besant Anglo-Sanskrit Library" at Rawal Pindi, one of the northernmost towns of India, in honor of Mrs. Besant's visit to that place on her last lecturing tour there. The Library was formally opened by Col. Olcott on 22nd March last in the presence of the local nobility and gentry. Miss. Edger also addressed the meeting.

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THE *Amritsar* T. S. Branch has also opened a "Theosophical Library" at that place. It is free to members as a lending library and to others as a reading room. Thus the Theosophic work has been well and fittingly started in the northern part of Bharatvarsha, where the ancient Rishis and sages first taught the children of this land spiritual knowledge. In the absence of active propaganda work such free libraries are the best mediums for the spread of Theosophic knowledge, and the more such libraries are started throughout the world the more rapid will be progress of our cause.

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It is reported that the late Mr. Charles A. White F. T. S. of the Seattle Branch, T. S. America has bequeathed his estate to the Theosophical Society for the translation and publication of Sanskrit literature. Such bequests hold good only in cases when willed away in the name of the President of the T. S. and not to the Society as a body as it is not a legally constituted body. Owing to this very flaw a large bequest of about £ 8000 lately made by a colleague in Europe has been lost to the Society. For this reason, the form of bequest has been printed on the covers of our leading Magazines *The Theosophist* and *The Theosophical Review*.

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ON her way to Brindisi Mrs. Besant lectured in Rome—where it will be remembered a Branch has lately been started. Her lecture was delivered in French, to a large audience composed partly of materialists, partly of staunch Christians. Who but Mrs. Besant could have pioneered the Theosophic bark between the Scylla and Charybdis of such conflicting element.

FOUR more branches have been formed in the American Section during the last quarter. The total number of the branches actively at work there is now fifty-six, in spite of three branches which have been dissolved.

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ONE more branch in England (Croydon, London) and one at Hanover in Germany under the Presidency of Dr. Hubbe Schleiden, have also been started. Our indefatigable brother K. Narayanswami Aiyer reports the formation of three new branches in southern India, and the revival of a dormant branch. Branch Inspector Bro. Jaggannathia has also opened a branch at Nandyal.

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MANY of our theosophical friends who left us in 1895 and formed themselves into a separate party—first under Mr. Judge and latterly under Mrs. Tingley—have now seen fit to sever their connexion with the organization over which this lady has for some time past presided. In a resolution, brought forward at a recent convention, it was proposed to make Theosophy a branch of literature in the Universal Brotherhood Society. Naturally, the older theosophists who knew the value of theosophic teachings opposed such a scheme, but as they were in the minority the only alternative course open to them was to retire. Mrs. Tingley has thus lost many of her best members among whom may be mentioned Dr. Buck, Dr. and Mrs. Archibald Keightley Mr. and Mrs. Cland Falls Wright, Mr. Johnston and Dr. Frantz Hartman—these and many others have formed themselves into a Society of their own, under the leadership of Mr. Hargrave, who it will be remembered left Mrs. Tingley's Society some months ago.

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THE REV. JAMES MARTINEAU, now about ninety four years of age and one of England's great thinkers, took wine for feeble circulation early in life by advice of physicians. It brought on gout. In spite of medical advice, he gave it up, lost his gout, and has retained the power of mental application to an advanced age, noticing only that his tasks, as age advanced, required a longer time than in fresher days. He adds:—

“Few things, I believe, do more to lighten the spirits and sweeten the temper of families and of society than the repudiation of artificial indulgences.”—*Harbinger*.